

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1 - 29 (cancelled).

1           30. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article for absorbing body fluids which comprises a matrix  
3 containing metallic silver and a fiber having an outer  
4 surface, characterized in that the silver is chemically or  
5 physically attached exclusively to the surface and cannot be  
6 flushed away from the fiber in use of the sanitary article.

1           31. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 surface includes depressions and the metallic silver is  
4 attached in the depressions in the surface.

1           32. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 fiber is a synthetic fiber.

1           33. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 32, characterized in that said  
3 synthetic fiber is formed of a polymer selected from the

4 group consisting of polyamides, polyesters, polyacrylics,  
5 elastanes and polychlorides.

6 34. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
7 article according to claim 33, characterized in that the  
8 synthetic fiber is present in the form of a discrete fiber,  
9 a woven, a non-woven or a thread, and said silver is present  
10 in the form of bound particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter  
11 and in an amount equal to about 3% of the fiber weight.

1 35. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 fiber has a silver content of not more than 3%.

1 36. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 silver content of the fiber is just high enough to ensure  
4 that an antimicrobial effect is detectable for not more than  
5 24 hours on a first article surface of the sanitary article  
6 intended for body contact.

1 37. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 metallic silver is present in the form of bound particles  
4 from 1 to 30 nm in diameter.

1        38. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 37, characterized in that the  
3 metallic silver is present in the form of bound particles  
4 from 1 to 10 nm in diameter.

1        39. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 38, characterized in that the  
3 metallic silver is present in the form of bound particles  
4 from 1 to 6 nm in diameter.

5        40. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
6 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
7 metallic silver fully surrounds the outer surface of the  
8 fiber.

1        41. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 sanitary article contains at least one of a pulp and a  
4 superabsorbent.

1        42. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 sanitary article is constructed as a disposable article.

1           43. (previously presented) An absorbent article  
2 according to claim 30, characterized in that the sanitary  
3 article is constructed as a diaper, a pants-type diaper, a  
4 training pant, an incontinence pad, a feminine hygiene  
5 article, a sanitary napkin, a panty liner or a tampon.

1           44. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-  
4 woven fibers or threads in dispersed piecewise in the  
5 matrix.

1           45. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, characterized in that the  
3 fiber is in the form of discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-  
4 woven fibers or threads disposed within a layer of the  
5 sanitary article.

1           46. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 45, characterized in that said  
3 sanitary article includes a first article surface intended  
4 for body contact and a second article surface not intended  
5 for body contact, and the layer is disposed closer to the  
6 first article surface.

1           47. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 46, characterized in that the  
3 layer is closer to the first article surface than to the  
4 mid-point between the first article surface and the second  
5 article surface.

1           48. (previously presented) An absorbent sanitary  
2 article according to claim 30, wherein the fiber is present  
3 in the form of a discrete fiber, a woven, a non-woven or a  
4 thread, and said silver is present in the form of bound  
5 particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter and in an amount  
6 sufficient to ensure an antimicrobial effect detectable for  
7 not more than 24 hours at a first body contact surface of  
8 the sanitary article.

1           49. (currently amended) A process for producing an  
2 absorbent sanitary article for absorbing body fluids which  
3 comprises a matrix containing metallic silver, comprising  
4 the steps of disposing a fiber having an outer surface in  
5 said matrix and binding said metallic silver exclusively to  
6 said fiber surface so that the metallic silver cannot be  
7 flushed away from the fiber in use of the sanitary article.

1           50. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the binding step includes applying silver to the

3 fiber surface by electro, chemical or electrochemical  
4 deposition or by vapor deposition.

1 51. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49 wherein the silver is bound to the fiber by means of a  
3 chemical or physical bond.

1 52. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the fiber surface includes depressions and the  
3 metallic silver is attached in the depressions in the  
4 surface.

1 53. (previously presented) A process according claim  
2 49, wherein the surface of the fiber is mordanted prior to  
3 the binding of the silver.

1 54. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the fiber is a synthetic fiber.

1 55. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the silver is applied at a weight of up to a 3%  
3 based on the weight of the fiber.

1 56. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the silver is only applied at a weight just high

3 enough to ensure that an antimicrobial effect is detectable  
4 for not more than 24 hours on a first body contact surface  
5 of the sanitary article.

1 57. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the metallic silver is bound in the form of  
3 particles from 1 to 30 nm in diameter.

1 58. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein the metallic silver is applied such that the  
3 outer surface of the fiber is fully surrounded by silver.

1 59. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, wherein at least one of a pulp and a superabsorbent is  
3 incorporated in the sanitary article.

1 60. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of  
3 discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads  
4 dispersed piecewise.

1 61. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2 49, characterized in that the fiber is in the form of  
3 discrete fibers, woven fibers, non-woven fibers or threads  
4 is disposed within a layer of the sanitary article.

1           62. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2   61, characterized in that said sanitary article includes a  
3   first article surface intended for body contact and a second  
4   article surface not intended for body contact, and the layer  
5   is disposed closer to the first surface.

1           63. (previously presented) A process according to claim  
2   62, characterized in that the layer is closer to the first  
3   article surface than to the mid-point between the first  
4   article surface and the second article surface.